

Update regarding Covid-19

On Tuesday, March 10th, Governor Cooper declared a State of Emergency for North Carolina in preparation for a Covid-19 epidemic. The Governor's Office also released a statement, part of which is below:

When disasters strike, whether natural or man-made, state/local governments and emergency managers need quick access to resources that allow them to manage a crisis and return things to normal. The declaration of a State of Emergency helps elected leaders accomplish this mission.

Though "State of Emergency" may sound ominous, the impact it has on citizens is anything but threatening. A State of Emergency, according to state law, can be declared during a situation or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury or loss of life or property, resulting from a natural or man-made cause.

A State of Emergency helps:

- *Enable government officials to take extra measures to protect the public*
- *Trigger anti-price gouging laws*
- *Seek state or federal funding aid for disaster response if it is warranted*
- *At the state level, other executive orders may be issued along with the state of emergency declaration. For example, local and/or state authorities may restrict the sale of alcohol, impose curfews or limit where people may travel and gather. Other restrictions may include limiting the transportation and possession of dangerous weapons, controlling the comings and goings from an emergency area or ordering evacuations.*

Council President Dave Schultz and I have discussed our state government's response, the guidance offered by our Southeast District leaders, and what is best for Grace Lutheran Church. We agree that the situation with COVID-19 is extremely fluid and it is very likely that the number of confirmed cases here in the Triangle will increase significantly.

Such developments will put persons who have a compromised immune system (this includes persons who are taking immunosuppressant medicine for such things as psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, eczema, Crohn's/IBS, various cancers), have other existing diseases (especially those involving the respiratory tract), or are over the age of 60 at great risk.

If you fall into one of the above-named groups, we encourage remaining at home or otherwise limiting your exposure to potential carriers of, and potential exposure to, the virus to the extent you can. It is not just for your own health—as Christians, we are called to care for our neighbors, and each new infection that requires medical

intervention demands hospital staff and resources, which means that other medical situations such as heart attacks, car accidents and such must compete for scarce medical care.

Of course, Dave and I recognize that this advice could mean absenting yourself from worship or other church activities. If you do decide to be absent from worship, please let me know. I am exploring various options for “distance worship,” such as conference-call prayer or other types of Scripture and prayer-based worship that will allow persons sheltering in place during this time to hear the Word, share prayer and converse with brothers and sisters.

We will continue to gather weekly for the Divine Service, and Dave and I ask those attending to be diligent in their hygiene disciplines:

- † Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- † If soap is not available, scrub hands with alcohol-based sanitizer.
- † Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- † If you are sick, remain at home.

Most of all, pray! We have a God who loves us, who is at work for our good, and who gives us what we need to serve each other and glorify him. Pray for our leaders that they would make wise decisions. Pray for medical workers that they would be protected, do their work well, and that their families would not suffer greatly during this time. Pray for each other, that we may, in the words of St. Paul, be filled *with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope* (Romans 15:13).

In His Name,

Pr. Dave Brooks